

***THE***

***CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER***

***ASSIGNMENT***

***GUIDE***

August 2005

## **Welcome!**

The 2006 Assignment Season is underway! For all you veterans of the process, welcome back. Also, we want to particularly congratulate all the prospective new appointees and welcome them to the Chief Warrant Officer ranks. In that the CWO assignment process is different from what most of us have experienced at the enlisted grades, we have created this guide to:

- demystify the process
- pass along some of the rules of engagement we follow
- provide information that will help everyone involved in the process manage expectations
- help prepare you to counsel/educate your wardrooms on some assignment process survival tips

While we have targeted the information in this guide at the incumbent CWOs, and new appointees, we hope that commands and supervisors will find it useful for their own use or in counseling others.

## **The CWO Assignment Team**

The CWO Assignment Team within CGPC's Officer Personnel Management Division (CGPC-opm) consists of:

- CAPT Mike McAllister, Chief, Officer Assignments Branch (opm-2)
- LCDR Kevin Lopez, CWO BOSN (non-M) Assignment Officer (opm-2A)
- CWO Doug VanOort, CWO ELC/ENG/WEPS/COMMS/MAT/CWO MMS Assignment Officer (opm-2N)
- CWO Jamie Rambo, CWO AVI/PERS/F&S/INF/INV/MED/BNDM/GENDU Assignment Officer (opm-2M)

## **The Key Elements**

The CWO assignment process is, to a large extent, no different from what you've experienced in the past, in that the key elements remain the Shopping List, and your E-Resume.

## **The Shopping List**

The Shopping List of all the CWO billets we believe will be open in the current assignment season is typically published in August. As a starting point, the list includes all those billets where the incumbent will be tour-complete the following summer, together with billets fill by a CWO who has an approved 2006 separation request on file in CGPC-OPM.

In the weeks and months leading up to the Assignment Season, all billet openings will be reflected on the Shopping List via DIRECT ACCESS. In this

way the entire CWO new appointee population is kept informed of billets we expect to be open. Changes are announced in ALCGOFF message updates to the Shopping List. Additional guidance is provided in Officer Personnel SITREPs. The greatest number of changes normally occurs after the results of the Warrant to Lieutenant selection panel and Chief Warrant Officer continuation board. Other changes will likely occur as member's re-evaluate career and personal goals.

Shopping List updates, especially late in the process, are intended to give potential candidates a chance to consider new alternatives, and frequently are issued to develop contingency plans that may never be implemented. Please don't subject the Assignment Officer or the incumbent in an advertised billet to questions regarding why the billet will be vacant or what is happening with the incumbent.

Use the Shopping List when developing or updating your E-Resume. If you are tour complete or desire a transfer in the current assignment season, ensure your E-Resume is submitted in accordance with the timeline outlined in the AY03 kick-off message.

### **The E-Resume**

The E-Resume is your primary—and for the majority of cases can serve as the only necessary—method of communicating with us. Please do not view submitting your E-Resume as an entering position to begin an extensive, iterative dialog. Give us complete information so we can best serve you; updates along the way—based on Shopping List changes or other new information—are welcome. The bottom line is that your E-Resume should accurately reflect your personal preferences. In that regard, let us give you a reality overlay.

### **E-Resume Craftsmanship**

A well crafted E-Resume should allow flexibility and acknowledge an array of possible assignment outcomes. If you prefer an out-of-specialty assignment, tell us. But, also consider telling us what your specialty preferences are in the event an out-of-specialty assignment isn't possible. A very narrow E-Resume makes our work almost as easy as a blank E-Resume, as we presume you'll be equally thrilled with any assignment after the few preferences listed. A broad E-Resume tells us your preferences and addresses alternatives that you believe the Service will consider you for, given your specialty background and/or experience. We have received E-Resumes from CWOs with 10-15 diverse billets identified. We have also received E-Resumes with just one billet listed. Keep in mind that CWOs who have completed two consecutive tours in a highly desired geographic area should expect reassignment to another area. This will enable other officer to break into those favored areas.

### **E-Resume Due Date**

Your E-Resume is required by 1 October. Why so soon? That's when we begin a broad assessment of program and unit needs across paygrades, evaluating tradeoffs, and taking a vertical look at workforce issues before moving forward in our horizontal (by paygrade) assignment panels and decisions. We try to take timely soundings and adjust to changes as we progress. Delayed submission of an E-Resume will reduce your assignment choices. Notify your detailer immediately, via email, of any changes to your

Eresume after the 1 October submission deadline.

## **Extensions and Early Rotations**

What about extensions or, conversely, early rotations? **Extensions: All E-Resumes requesting an extension MUST be endorsed by your command.** Extensions are assignment decisions; however, a first extension will normally be granted without the individual having to compete with other CWOs requesting that particular billet. CWOs requesting a second extension will compete with the other CWOs requesting that particular billet. CWOs requesting a second extension in a highly desired billet should expect reassignment, so that others may have the opportunity to serve in those sought-after jobs.

**Early Rotations: All E-Resumes requesting early rotation MUST be endorsed by your command.** The purpose of the command endorsement is not to give an opinion of your suitability for the requested billet(s), but rather to address the effect your early departure would have on unit continuity or the overall skill/experience level of the unit staff. “Conditional” positive endorsements (e.g., “I support early rotation for billet X but not for billet Y”) are not appropriate. Early rotations most often occur in circumstances or when a specific specialty or Service need cannot be adequately satisfied using officers that are tour complete.

## **Special Needs**

Many CWOs have “special needs,” but remember that in this context, a Special Need is a specific term defining types of situations involving an officer and/or family that must be approved to be accepted into the Special Needs Program. **Any officer with a Special Need must register it in this mandatory program in accordance with COMDTINST 1754.7 (series).** This will result in a special flag in DIRECT ACCESS that is visible to the AOs- it only tells us that you have a Special Need, not the details. When we see that indicator, we work closely with the program administrator in G-WKW to ensure potential assignment outcomes are compatible with the Special Need. Please don’t wait to introduce this consideration until after you’ve received orders; you make it more difficult for us in our attempts to accommodate your circumstance. Enrolling is not optional, the Service requires active duty personnel to enroll in the Coast Guard Special Needs Program. This ensures early identification of families with special needs, maximizes the provision of quality service to reduce family stress and undue hardship, and minimizes costly, disruptive off season reassignments and early return of family members from outside the continental United States.

Being enrolled in special needs does not give anyone the advantage for any particular job. Having access to a specific health care professional is not required if the medical care can be met elsewhere.

Familiarize yourself with Work Life policies. We find many CWOs who should be enrolled in the program are not. The reason given most often is the member doesn’t want to bother the Coast Guard, or they don’t want special treatment. If you have a situation that qualifies as a Special Need, you must

register. Once enrolled, it helps us to accommodate your needs. Whatever the medical condition or other situation, the Work Life staff can tell us where your needs can be met. It may not be somewhere you believe you should be, and you may not be able to stay in an area just because you like the doctor you have now, but we will strive to locate an assignment area where the Special Need can be met. That's the key. The worst thing you can do is nothing. If you have a Special Need, get enrolled!

### **Other Concerns**

Aside from Special Needs, among the most prevalent concerns many of us have relate to children in high school, caring for aging parents, and spouse employment issues. We are sympathetic to those concerns, but you need to know that these issues are often so common they become the norm, not exceptions. As such, it becomes impossible to accommodate everyone's desires.

### **Collocation**

The collocation policy allows married active duty members the opportunity to reside jointly whenever possible. However, couples should realize that the Service might not be able to collocate them throughout their careers depending on Service need and professional development. In cases where tour lengths are not aligned, assignment officers may adjust the tour length of one member to allow for both to transfer in the same assignment season.

Both married members desiring collocation should tailor comments in the E-Resume to address desire for collocation with spouse. We recommend that couples work together on their E-Resumes, and give the assignment officers reasonable geographic and billet options. Further information on this policy can be found in the PERSMAN, Article 4.A.8.

### **The Assignment Process**

Armed with the Shopping List and your E-Resumes, we can then begin to process all the information we will need to develop assignment recommendations.

### **Performance Basis**

Officer assignments are primarily performance based decisions. It is incumbent upon the member to maintain a high level of performance to compete favorably for desired assignments. All tour complete CWOs will compete equally for assignments.

### **New Appointee Lists**

Opm-1, working with opm-2, establishes the cutoff for the annual promotion year's eligibility list for appointment to CWO specialties. The cutoff is a forecast of known retirements, separations, vacant billets, new billets, and billet deletions that will occur throughout the upcoming assignment season. This data allows the assignment officers to estimate the number of appointees that will be needed to align with the number of billets authorized. All appointments to CWO are made to fill vacancies, and are made when the assignment action can best be accomplished in the normal personnel assignment process. Appointees whose names appear at or above the cutoff who have not been appointed by the

time the current list expires on 31 May will be carried over to the top of the new eligibility list, ahead of the new candidates.

As new information is received which creates additional vacancies, such as results from promotion boards, retirement requests, new billets, etc., or members elect to remove their name from the appointment list, the assignment officers will revise the cutoff. This will normally be done in October, and then again in January. All known vacancies for tour complete officers, as well as vacancies that will be created by separation or mandatory retirement of incumbent billets on the shopping list it allows the maximum opportunity to compete for the assignment and minimizes the number of off-season assignments that need to be made.

After the slate for incumbent warrants (specialties) are complete, CWO new appointees are notified of available assignment opportunities. This is normally done in March to allow inclusion of those billets previously slated to be filled by incumbent CWOs who have elected to RILO, and account for any late season voluntary retirements or billet creations. This ensures maximum competition for desired billets by CWO appointees.

The appointment to CWO is predicated on agreement concerning a given assignment between the prospective appointee and the respective AO. Assignments to new appointees are offered sequentially, if at all possible. However, there are numerous examples where this is not possible. For example: 1) CWO (BOSN) to develop as many future CO candidates as possible, while meeting the Service needs of all billets, 2) Assignments in the opm-2N account for appointees are based primarily on years of service and prior marine safety experience, 3) special assignments within the 2M account. Also, appointees with 16 years or less of service are preferred candidates for assignment to the marine safety training billets.

### **Retired Recall to Active Duty**

Every year warrant officers ask about “contracts.” More accurately they are called, “Retired Recall to active duty agreements.” CG Policies can be found in PERSMAN Chapter 1, 4 & 11. Law also guides much of this process.

What about officers who are retiring? Folks who are facing mandatory retirement can pursue continuation past 30 years of service, if offered that year, or pursue retired recall. Their only way to return to active duty after retiring is by requesting retired recall. The member actually retires from the Service and if the recall is approved, returns to work at the same rank. Eligibility requirements are discussed in the PERSMAN. In order for a retired recall request to be approved the following conditions must be met:

1. The CG needs a warrant officer with your rank and specialty
2. There exists a vacant billet at the unit you desire
3. Your past performance warrants you coming back to the CG

If you are successful in your bid for retired recall, you will be paid just the same

as the day you left the Service. Impacts on your retirement benefits when you return to retired status depend on the length of time you serve in the retired recall capacity. Typically your base pay calculation does not change, only the percentage does. If interested, you should contact your assignment officer or opm-1.

### **RILO (Retire in lieu of orders)**

It is important to understand the RILO parameters...not everyone is eligible to RILO.

- If you have 20 years of service, you have no obligated service requirements, and you prefer to retire instead of accepting orders, your request will normally be granted.
- If you are selected to the next rank, eligible to retire, and request to retire in lieu of orders, you must also ask to voluntarily have your name removed from the list of CWO selectees.
- If you are a newly promoted CWO, our personnel regulations require you to serve in grade for two years prior to retiring. If your two years of obligated service isn't up by 1 August, or if you have other obligated service (advanced education pay-back, OCONUS transfer, etc.), you are not eligible to RILO.

Please also note that all RILOs must take place by August. You can ask to retire earlier. If you prefer a later retirement date (perhaps to be eligible for a longevity pay raise or to better meet your personal needs), then you need to submit your voluntary retirement request in time for us to act on it prior to the assignment season.

### **Orders**

November-March orders are transmitted via DIRECT ACCESS to the respective personnel offices, starting with OCONUS transfers and other officers known to have early reporting dates. Usually all CWO orders are out by the beginning of March. We do not specify detaching or reporting dates. The majority of warrant officer orders are issued with the following paragraph, "Firm reporting date to be coordinated between transferring and receiving commands. DIRLAUTH." While the DIRECT ACCESS system requires that an estimated report date be entered into the system in order to cut orders, typically 01July200X is entered as a default, commands are authorized to arrange exact dates, i.e. direct liaison authorized/DIRLAUTH.

### **Off-Season**

Although the vast majority of CWO assignments are handled during the process described above, each year circumstances arise which require an off-season transfer decisions not previously contemplated.

When we become aware of an upcoming off-season vacancy, we advertise the billet in an ALCGOFF message, along with any other billets that stand a good chance of opening as part of a daisy chain (unless advertised extensively during the regular assignment season).

**Off-Season Retirements**

Under Personnel Manual policy, eligible officers may submit a request for retirement a minimum of six months and no more than twelve months in advance of the desired separation date. We can normally approve a request made within those parameters, but in some cases Service need or circumstances at a unit do not permit approval of the requested date. One important consideration is our ability to backfill the retiring officer's billet. There are usually no easy backfill options when a vacancy occurs outside the annual assignment process. For that reason, command endorsements on retirement requests must address backfill requirements. Retirement requests which would cause a vacancy off-season may face disapproval if an acceptable backfill arrangement cannot be found and the command is not willing to absorb a gap.

***GOOD LUCK!***

We hope you find this information useful in understanding your assignment process and that it helps reduce the associated anxiety. We recognize how important the outcome of assignment decisions is to each individual and to the Service. We look forward to serving you and hope that our messages, voice mail, and website publication, as well as personal contact, will keep you well informed.